

June 2, 1999

**MINUTES OF AN ADJOURNED REGULAR
MEETING (WORKSHOP) OF THE TORRANCE CITY COUNCIL
AND THE TORRANCE REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

OPENING CEREMONIES

1. CALL TO TORDER

The Torrance City Council and the Torrance Redevelopment Agency convened in an adjourned regular meeting at 5:40 p.m., on Wednesday, June 2, 1999, in Council Chambers of Torrance City Hall for the purpose of conducting the First Budget Workshop for consideration of the City Manager's Proposed 1999-2001 Budget.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Councilmembers Cribbs, Horwich, Lee, Messerlian,
and Mayor Hardison.

Absent: Councilmembers O'Donnell and Walker.

Also Present: City Manager Jackson, City Attorney Fellows,
City Clerk Herbers and staff representatives.

3. AFFIDAVIT OF POSTING

MOTION: Councilman Lee, seconded by Councilwoman Cribbs, moved to accept and file the report of the City Clerk on the posting of the agenda for this meeting. There being no objection, Mayor Hardison so ordered.

4. PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSED 1999-2001 BUDGET

4a. CITY MANAGER'S OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED 1999-2001 BUDGET

City Manager Jackson noted that the Proposed 1999-2001 Budget is the first expansion budget that the City has had in a number of years and reflects a modest growth in revenues and a significant reduction of expenditures due to Public Employee Retirement System (PERS) rate adjustments. He indicated that these budget savings would be used to restore services, programs and internal funds that were modified during recession years; to create a reserve for wage and benefit increases; and to enhance programs and services that have been identified as high priority by the community. He noted that input obtained through community/employee outreach efforts and during the updating of the City's Strategic Plan was utilized in the development of the proposed budget and discussed guidelines used by City departments in the revision of their budgets. He advised that the Budget Review Team worked with the departments to refine their areas of focus as they relate to the Strategic Plan and that departments were required to submit a work plan directly correlated to the goals outlined in the department head's budget message. He noted that the Budget Review Team will assess the progress toward the achievement of goals on a quarterly basis.

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In a slide presentation, Finance Director Tsao highlighted recent revisions to the State's budget, noting that there are no provisions for additional relief for local governments at this time; provided an overview of the City's proposed budget for 1999-2001, including the amount allocated for budget modifications and sources of funding; and discussed ten-year budget projections.

City Manager Jackson outlined the four categories of budget modifications as follows: internal enhancement of fiscal resources, restoration of service levels, support necessary to follow through on new capital projects, and additions mandated by regulatory requirements or needed to achieve Strategic Plan goals.

With the aid of slides, Assistant City Manager Giordano supplied detailed information regarding the proposed budget modifications as categorized by Strategic Plan priorities.

City Manager Jackson noted that the Parks and Recreation Administrative Specialist, Fire Administrative Specialist and other fire positions are tentative since they are subject to the meet and confer process, and that the desalination plant and the parkway crew are proposed but on hold, pending additional study and evaluation. He thanked City departments for the time and effort spent on internal evaluation and briefly described the process leading up to the formal adoption of the budget.

4b. QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, DISCUSSION

Councilman Lee questioned whether a reserve was set aside in case the new Street Lighting District fails to pass, and City Manager Jackson advised that the city-wide sidewalk improvement program could be eliminated to provide funding for one year but that budget modifications would have to be reassessed if long-term funding becomes necessary.

Referring to the proposal to phase out General Fund reliance on year-end carry-over, Councilman Lee related his impression that the \$600,000 carry-over has been an amount that has been easily achieved through unfilled positions and suggested phasing out the carry-over funds during a two or three year period to allow more flexibility. He suggested the possibility of using some of the carry-over funds for an annual picnic for City employees, an event that was discontinued because of budget cutbacks.

With regard to the budget modifications, Councilman Lee voiced support for additional funds proposed for the removal of temporary signs and for expanding the City's after-school program, commenting on the valuable service this program provides. He asked about accelerating the tree removal/replanting program, noting that this is an often-mentioned concern of residents, and City Manager Jackson advised that he believes that the \$100,000 budgeted to increase the tree removal/replanting contract will be adequate to achieve the Streetscape Division's goals.

Councilman Lee stated that although the program revision to restore Sunday library service was not recommended for approval, he would be in favor of reopening the libraries on Sundays; and asked if something could be done on a contract basis to get engineering projects that have fallen behind schedule back on track. City Manager Jackson responded that Sunday library service is not cost effective and is very difficult to staff; and that several factors are involved in the delay of engineering projects and that

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staff would be returning to the Council with a re-prioritized list of projects and a realistic schedule for their completion.

Councilman Messerlian expressed support for reinstating Sunday library service. Referring to the proposed addition of an Environmental Quality Officer, he suggested that some Code enforcement activities focus on weekends and evenings; and commenting on the proposal to fund safety awards, he stated that he finds the concept of offering monetary rewards for the non-occurrence of injuries incongruent.

Responding to Councilman Messerlian's inquiries, Assistant City Manager Giordano provided clarification regarding the staffing of the Nature Center, and Parks and Recreation Director Barnett explained that the "Spirit Bus" was being proposed to provide a shuttle service for teens to various Parks and Recreation activities.

Councilwoman Cribbs indicated that she would submit most of her questions and comments in writing. She questioned whether departmental staff provided input concerning the priority of proposed program revisions, and City Jackson advised that in most cases where choices had to be made, decisions were based on departmental priorities. She expressed concerns that there are no reserves for repairs/upgrading of the infrastructure; stated that she would like to see some commitment in this budget for capital expenditures rather than relying on year-end carry-over; and requested information concerning the budget plan for the Madrona Marsh as it was originally approved. She commended Finance Director Tsao and the Budget Review Team for the tremendous amount of work that went into the preparation of the budget.

Councilman Horwich commented that while it is a function of government to try to do the most good for the most people in utilizing available resources, unfortunately in the process, some very worthwhile programs fall through the cracks. He stated that he personally would like to see the library open on Sundays even if it would only benefit a relatively small number of people, and that he would like consideration to be given to assisting the Torrance Symphony by providing funding for one of their five yearly concerts in view of their significant contribution to the quality of life of the community.

Mayor Hardison spoke of the need for government to continue to be efficient even in times when additional resources are available and stated that Councilmembers who have suggested additions to the budget should be prepared to identify where that money should come from. She pointed out that many of the proposed modifications and programs are attached to new revenue sources. Referring to the proposed program revision for funding sign removal, she asked that the City Attorney's Office be consulted regarding what can or cannot be removed in terms of signage, citing concerns about First Amendment rights. She commented on Torrance Rose Float Association's increasingly difficult task of raising money for the City of Torrance's entry in the annual Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade and expressed concerns about their ability to continue to provide their \$15,000 portion of the funding. She indicated that, in the interest of time, she would submit the rest of her comments in writing.

Mayor Hardison invited audience members unable to attend the Budget Workshop on June 8, 1999, to comment at this time; and there being no requests to speak, called for the meeting's adjournment.

4c. FOLLOW-UP

No additional comments.

5. CLOSING REMARKS

No additional comments.

6. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:19 p.m., the meeting was adjourned to Tuesday, June 8, 1999, at 5:30 p.m. for the Second Budget Workshop, with the regular City Council meeting to commence at 7:00 p.m.

Mayor of the City of Torrance

ATTEST:

City Clerk of the City of Torrance